

Application No. 09/863,674
Reply to Office Action mailed April 7, 2004

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-17. (Cancelled)

18. (Currently Amended) A method for generating a concentration gradient in a microfluidic channel comprising the steps of:

providing a microfluidic channel having a first inlet and a second inlet;
introducing a first fluid containing a diffusible constituent into the first inlet;

introducing a second fluid into the second inlet;

flowing the first and second fluids through the microfluidic channel in parallel laminar flow such that the diffusible constituent diffuses between the first fluid and the second fluid to form a single combined solution-fluid stream which has a uniform composition across the width of the microfluidic channel; and

varying the flow rate of the first fluid, the second fluid or both the first and second fluids such that the ratio of the flow rates of the first and second fluids is not constant and the concentration of the diffusible constituent in the single combined solution-fluid stream varies along the length of the microfluidic channel.

19. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 18, wherein the microfluidic channel further comprises a third inlet positioned downstream of the first and second inlets, and wherein the method further comprises the steps of:

introducing a third fluid containing a particulate material into the third inlet; and

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flowing the third fluid through the microfluidic channel in parallel laminar flow with the single combined-solution fluid stream.

20. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19, further comprising the step of detecting an interaction between the diffusible constituent and the particulate matter.

21. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 18, wherein the diffusible constituent is a soluble compound.

22. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19, wherein the particulate material comprises a biological material.

23. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 22, wherein the biological matter comprises cells.

24. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 22, wherein the biological material comprises proteins.

25. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19, wherein the particulate material comprises a chemical material.

26. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 25, wherein the chemical materials comprises reactive beads.